AMENDED CLAIMS   IAP9 Rec'd PCT/PTO ◠8 DEC 2005
[received by the International Bureau on 14 March 2005 (14.03.05);
original claims 15-19, 21, 24 and 25 are cancelled; renumbering of original claims
20, 22, 23 and 26 as new claims 15-18; remaining claims unchanged (2 pages)]

(b) forming an aperture extending through the compressed region of the material, the material being compressed around the periphery of the aperture; and

(c) separating the washer from the wadding material;

so that the compressed wadding material of the washer exhibits sufficient elasticity at least around the periphery of the aperture such that, when the washer is fitted to upholstery together with a tuft, the dimensions of the aperture may increase sufficiently to accommodate engagement means for the tuft and then return to a resting state after disengagement of the engagement means for the tuft so as to prevent disengagement of the tuft.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the wadding material contains fusible material.

11. A method according to claim 10, wherein step (a) comprises compression and/or fusion of the wadding material containing fusible material, such that the washer is compressed and/or fused around the periphery of the aperture.

12. A method according to any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein steps (a) and (b) occur substantially simultaneously.

13. A method according to any one of claims 9 to 12, wherein step (a) is carried out so as to leave an area immediately surrounding the aperture unmodified.

14. A method according to any one of claims 9 to 13, carried out continuously to produce a washer associated with one or more further such washers.

15. Upholstery fitted with at least one washer as defined in any one of claims 1 to 8.

16. A washer substantially as described and illustrated herein with reference to the accompanying Figs. 8a, 8b, 9 and 12.

17. A method of manufacturing a washer from wadding material substantially as described and illustrated herein with reference to the accompanying Figs. 10a, 10b and 10c.

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18. Upholstery substantially as described and illustrated herein with reference to the accompanying Fig. 11.